

seem almost at odds with the translation. There is brief mention of the significance of the word *tyrannos*, but little about how it is manipulated within the play. The word '*tyrannos*', used directly or in cognate form, occurs at least a dozen times within the first two-thirds of the play but never subsequently. On four occasions M. translates it as 'ruler', five times as 'king', once 'royal power', once 'absolute power', and only once as 'tyrant' ('*Hubris* breeds the tyrant'). This may seem picky, but is actually important if you are considering dramatic 'irony', which A. seems to understand as simply identifying when the audience knows more than the characters.

She does point out that Jocasta realizes the truth before Oedipus but says hardly anything about the range of oracular pronouncements and the possible reasons for their discrepancy. She draws useful attention to a number of modern versions, but why discuss the Creon of Anouilh's *Antigone* and ignore the far more direct parallel in the same playwright's *Oedipe ou le roi boiteux*?

Elsewhere, A. pays an uneasy lip-service to performance issues, equating 'pace' with 'speed', and perpetuating the myth that an actor in a mask 'could communicate only one or two emotions'. Too many of the bullet-point questions with which the notes are peppered have that special crassness of a GCSE empathy exercise, inviting today's sixteen-year-olds to speculate on how they might have felt as soldiers in the trenches about to go over the top: 'Do you think Creon is quoting or paraphrasing [the oracle]?'; 'How far does Tiresias control his feelings in this scene?'; 'Has Jocasta always disbelieved in oracles?'; 'If this play ended differently with Apollo appearing *ex machina*, what might he say? How far would he accept responsibility?' These do not enhance the sense of the play as a play; in fact, they are downright unhelpful.

There is also one bizarre error over which a veil might be drawn were it not for the difficulty in understanding how it could ever have been suggested of *Oedipus at Colonus* that it took up the story 'after the events in this play [*Oedipus Tyrannus*] and those of *Antigone*'.

Numerous virtues apart, it is simply not clear what level this edition is aimed at. Many students of classics and of drama may be looking for some more challenging stimulus and at least more penetrating questions than being invited to speculate on why Oedipus asks for a sword when he has just found his wife/mother swinging at the end of a rope.

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S. RUDEN: *Aristophanes: Lysistrata. Translated, with Notes and Topical Commentaries*. Pp. x + 126. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003. Paper, US\$5.95 (Cased, US\$24.95). ISBN: 0-87220-603-3 (0-87220-604-1 hbk).

Sarah Ruden's *Lysistrata* does not purport to be a full-blown scholarly edition; rather, R. sees her work as a useful place for students to get into Greek Comedy. She insists on two principles: that the translation be funny, and the notes and accompanying material be basic and entertaining. It is relatively easy to confirm that her focus has not been on a full report of scholarly views. She has, for instance, stuck with an interpretation of the Scythian girl ('Skythaina') at 184 as a female Scythian archer offered by Jeff Henderson in his 1987 edition (the one R. says she mostly used). Henderson revised his view in his Loeb translation of 2000, no doubt because he was convinced by Sommerstein's excellent note on that line in his 1990 Warminster edition. The work, then, must be judged on R.'s own principles, rather than with nit-picking pedantry.

R.'s translation is, in contrast to other recent versions by Sommerstein (1973, 1990) and Henderson (2000), in verse. It does, however, share this feature with Halliwell's 1997 Oxford version. It is worth making a brief comparison between the latter and R., to illustrate what R. has made of the venture. At 137–9, after the women have rejected her plan to deprive the menfolk of their 'marital rights', Lysistrata famously condemns her sex for being obsessed with sex. Halliwell's translation of the lines is:

The female sex! Sheer lustfulness, that's us!
No wonder they write such tragedies about us!
Our lives are simply full of sex and intrigue.

R. writes:

O gender fit for boning up the butt!

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No wonder we're the stuff of tragedies:
Some guy, a bit of nookie, and a brat.

Two things are immediately striking. First, R.'s verse reveals a really good musical ear. This quality is consistent throughout (although English readers used to saying *Lysistrata* with the stress on the antepenultimate may find it tricky to follow R.'s—as in the Greek tonic accent—on the penultimate). Secondly, there is real idiomatic verve in R.'s version. She has an ear for the poetry of sexual innuendo and obscenity. Compare 217 in Halliwell

At home I'll stay as chaste as any virgin

with R.

I shall stay home unhumped both night and day.

The African-American tinged speech of R.'s *Lampito* also makes an interesting change from the usual Scottish brogue (but there is always the problem of ethnic condescension to contend with). I do think, in short, that R. has achieved her goal of an entertaining and accessible translation, which has the merit of replicating comedy's tight verse form. It would probably play well in the theatre, too. The same is true with regard to the ancillary material. The notes (at the foot of each page to facilitate immediate access) are pithy and helpful, often explaining divergences from the original as well as literary and cultural references. The 'topical commentaries' are essays on 'Athenian Democracy', 'Ancient Greek Warfare', 'Athenian Women', and 'Greek Comedy'. While they are not totally up-to-date in every respect, they are well written and attempt to draw the reader in both by use of a witty and idiomatic style and provocative statements. For example, the essay on 'Athenian Democracy' begins (p. 74): '*Lysistrata* is a play about democracy'. Incidentally, in this particular essay, non-US readers may be puzzled by such specific Americanisms as 'pork barrel'. The volume is topped off with a selected bibliography and an index to the commentaries. R. clearly enjoys ancient comic writing (witness her earlier work on *Petronius*), and students who use her translation will certainly be drawn in by her linguistic gutsiness and by her individualistic essays.

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E. CSAPO, M. C. MILLER (edd.): *Poetry, Theory, Praxis. The Social Life of Myth, Word and Image in Ancient Greece. Essays in Honour of William J. Slater*. Pp. xiv + 266, ill. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003. Cased, £40. ISBN: 1-84217-101-1.

This latest *Festschrift* contains thirteen essays in honour of the Canadian classicist William J. Slater. The contributions are mostly of a high quality, but they are extremely heterogeneous in subject-matter and approach (perhaps rather more so than usual in this *genre*). The book's miscellaneous character is reflected in its long-winded triple title.

A degree of editorial anxiety in this regard is seen in Csapo's preface (pp. vii–viii). What holds the contributions together, he claims, is their methodology. That is, all the scholars here aim to demonstrate that a fuller understanding of various texts or artefacts can be achieved by looking at them in their 'context'. This overused word is further defined by C. as follows: "'Context' means reinserting . . . clinically isolated words, images, ideas and actions into their living, pragmatic, social contexts' (p. viii). The odd circularity of this definition does not obscure its meaning; however, it does seem that this type of methodology characterizes most classical scholarship nowadays. Thus it remains difficult to discern a distinctive approach or character to the collection—which reduces the likelihood that anyone apart from the honorand and the reviewer will want to read the book from cover to cover. This criticism aside, I have no doubt that Prof. Slater and many others will find a great deal to commend in the individual contributions here.

The editors have divided the book into three very broadly defined sections. The first ('Myth and Cult') contains four excellent essays. The first, by Robert Fowler (pp. 2–18), is the most traditionally 'historical' (i.e. textual) piece in the collection. He asks 'who were the Pelasgians?', and, after surveying references in numerous texts, gives a negative but salutary answer. In the end, Fowler argues, one can know scarcely anything about the 'Pelasgians', but the question can lead

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